

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01
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-----022777 050311Z /62

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 114640

FOR MS. CLAPP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, VE

SUBJECT: ARMS RESTRAINT FOLLOWUP: THE NUMBERS GAME

REF: CARACAS 4093

1. A VARIETY OF EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO DEVELOP USABLE SUPPORTING STATISTICAL MATERIALS AS REQUESTED REFTEL. ACDA YESTERDAY POUCHED TEN COPIES OF ITS UNCLASSIFIED 1975 REPORT ON WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURES, BUT NONE OF OUR OTHER EFFORTS SEEMS LIKELY TO BEAR FRUIT BY TOMORROW.

2. PART OF THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THAT DEFINITIONAL AMBIGUITIES AND REPORTING DIFFERENCES COMBINE WITH THE PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY ANY SERIOUS COUNTRY TO CONCEAL CERTAIN ASPECTS OF ITS DEFENSE POSTURE TO MAKE COMPARABLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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DETAILED AND RELIABLE DATA VERY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. THE TERM OF ARMS TRANSFER TRANSACTIONS (INCLUDING FINANCING, LENGTH OF PAYMENT PERIODS, AND SPARES AND SERVICES COVERED) GENERALLY VARY GREATLY DEPENDING ON THE CASE, AND PARTICULARLY THE SUPPLIER. THEY ARE NOT OFTEN READILY AVAILABLE. THE USE OF RUMOR AS A BARGAINING AND PROPAGANDA TOOL COMPOUNDS THIS UNCERTAINTY. IN ADDITION, STATISTI-

CAL SERIES FREQUENTLY DO NOT DISTINGUISH CONSISTENTLY

BETWEEN ORDERS AND ACTUAL DELIVERIES, OR BETWEEN FUNDS BUDGETED AND ACTUALLY SPENT. ATTRITION RATES AND UTILIZATION PATTERNS ARE ANOTHER PROBLEM. FINALLY, THE DISCONTINUOUS NATURE OF ANY ONE COUNTRY'S PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS CAN PRODUCE A CLUSTERING OR PEAKING OF ORDERS BETWEEN PERIODS OF RELATIVE INACTIVITY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN LDC'S, AND MAKES STATISTICAL SERIES VERY SENSITIVE TO SHORT TIME FRAMES, AND POTENTIALLY QUITE MISLEADING IF USED FOR DIRECT COMPARISONS AMONG COUNTRIES.

3. THESE PROBLEMS EXPLAIN SOME OF THE REASONS FOR OUR EMPHASIS IN THE FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY NON-PAPERS ON INFORMAL SEMINARS, CONFIDENCE-BUILDING, INFORMATION EXCHANGE, AND THE SEARCH FOR TECHNICAL AND DEFINITIONAL STANDARDS. THEY DO NOT, WE REALIZE ENABLE YOU TO GIVE THE VENEZULANS AN IDEA OF THE ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE INVOLVED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ON NUMBERS, BUT CANNOT PROMISE IMMEDIATE RESULTS.

4. THIS CONCLUDES TONIGHT'S SERIES. CHRISTOPHER

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